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April Fool.

By Helen A. Hawley.

Little Robin Redbreast
Came from the south-land,
Saying, "Spring is early,
So I understand.

"How foolish the birds are
Who think they must wait
Till the May flowers bloom;
I'll not be so late.

"Before my friends get here,
My nest will be done,
And while they are building,
I'll sing in the sun.

"Or ere March is over,
I'll pick out a tree,
And I'll soon have my home
As snug as can be."

Ambition among birds,
Like that of human pride,
Sometimes o'erleaps itself
And falls on t'other side.

When first of April came,
Robin shivered in the snow;
"Who is April Fool?" he said,
"I'm sure now I know!"

An April Joke.

By Sydney Dayre.

"ITS jolly to have April Fool's Day come on Saturday."

So declared Pete, and his cousin from the city, who was making him a short visit, fully agreed with him.

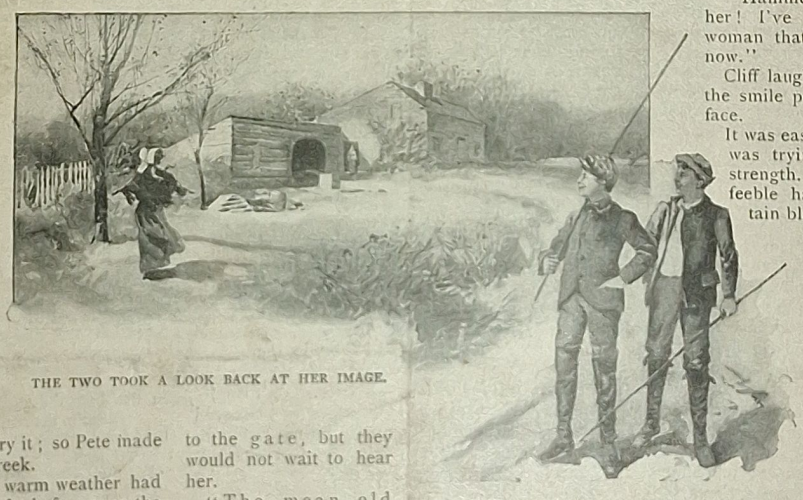
They spent the earlier morning hours in playing the usual small tricks belonging to the day. Mother and sisters bore amiably the mild jokes, allowing themselves to be "fooled" with very satisfactory screams and jumps and a great show of surprise. But it grew tame at last.

"Let's go fishing," proposed Cliff.

"I'm afraid it's most too early," said Pete, doubtfully.

"Is it?" said Cliff. "Why, I thought you could always fish—unless there was ice."

Pete laughed and went to consult his father, who was also of the opinion that the water might be too cold. Cliff, however, was anxious to try it; so Pete made ready for an excursion up the creek.



THE TWO TOOK A LOOK BACK AT HER IMAGE.

A week or two of unusually warm weather had apparently tempered the water, for before noon the boys had been encouraged by several nibbles and one small fish, which to Pete's generous satisfaction had preferred his cousin's hook. In the course of their sport the boys had followed the stream in its wanderings until at noon they found themselves far from home.

"I wish we'd brought a lunch," said Pete. "I'm hungry."

"So am I," said Cliff. "But," he continued, rendered enthusiastic by his success, "don't let's go home. I'd rather be hungry than quit fishing."

"Perhaps we needn't go hungry, anyway. We're close by Mrs. Gill's—see that little bit of a house. She always has lots of fruit—berries and apples and things."

"But I thought you didn't have fruit so soon after winter," said Cliff.

"We don't. But she keeps hens, too, and—."

"Eggs?" exclaimed Cliff.

"Yes. What do you say to making a fire with those dead branches and roasting some fresh eggs in the ashes. They're prime so."

"Let's!" exclaimed Cliff. "Come, let's go and ask the old woman."

"Wait," said the country-wise Pete. "We'll start our fire, so it'll be burning down to ashes while we go."

Very soon the dead branches were merrily crackling in the fire. Then the boys hurried towards the tiny old house. A bit of garden lay in front of it, and at the back was a yard with some tumble-down sheds and a chicken house, beyond which was a small orchard. Everything looked old, forlorn and decayed.

"She lives here all alone and makes a living by selling her eggs and fruit," Pete explained to his cousin as they drew near.

In answer to their knock the door was opened by a small, thin woman with gray hair and faded eyes, looking as old and forlorn as her surroundings.

"Good morning, Mrs. Gill," said Pete. "We came to ask you to let us have a few eggs. I'm Pete Field, and I'll come over and pay for 'em next week—sure."

The old woman hesitated and looked as if in doubt, from one to the other. Then she slowly shook her head.

"No," she said. "I'm afraid I couldn't do it. You see, I—."

She called something after them as they walked to the gate, but they would not wait to hear her.

"The mean old thing!" exclaimed Pete in great wrath. "Wouldn't trust me—for all I told her who I was. I'd like to smash her eggs against her old house."

"Let's help ourselves to some eggs," suggested Cliff.

"No," objected Pete.

"But you could pay for 'em."

"I'd like to—but I don't believe 'twould be just the thing to do."

They went slowly past the shabby old shed. A pile of old clothes lay just inside the door.

"Say," said Pete, always full of a boy's love of mischief, "let's play the old lady a trick."

"That'll just suit me," said Cliff. "I'd like to pay her up. How?"

"Let's dress up a board with these old clothes and stand it inside the door of this shed so that when she opens it it'll tumble down about her ears and scare the life out of her."

With much subdued laughter the two carried out the plan. As the shabby clothes, draped on a post, took on a grotesque likeness to the shape of their poor old owner, the young rascals were compelled to cover their mouths with their hands to keep in the shouts of merriment which threatened to spoil their fun by letting out the secret.

After standing the effigy inside the door, they went back to their fishing.

They had better luck. Each one caught a few small fish. But at the end of couple of hours Pete threw his rod on the ground.

"I'm hungry, and I'm tired of it. And I wish—."

"So do I," chimed in Cliff, with readiness. "She's such an old woman."

"And such a mite of a thing."

"I wonder if she's gone to that door yet."

"It might knock her down or something. The getting scared, I mean."

"Old folks always get scared."

"And women."

"And when it's an old woman! Let's go back and see."

It was not very far. Before long the boys were cautiously peeping about Mrs. Gill's premises, watching their opportunity to find their way to the shed without being seen.

"I don't believe we can," at length said Cliff. "She's busy about something in the back yard."

"What's she doing?"

"Hammering at something. Look at her! I've heard say there never was a woman that could drive a nail. Watch, now."

Cliff laughed. Pete did not laugh, and the smile presently went away from Cliff's face.

It was easy to see that the poor old lady was trying something beyond her strength. The heavy hammer in her feeble hands came down with uncertain blows. As she held the nail with the other hand, Cliff noticed how thin and wrinkled it was. This nail had a poor point, and as it turned to one side under the hammer, the blow fell on her hand. It was really a matter of rejoicing that the stroke was such a weak one.

Pete forgot all about his desire to remain concealed, and about the necessity of getting the "April fool" out of the way in time.

"Here, Mrs. Gill," he cried, "let me take a whack at that. What is it you want done?"

She looked up in surprise, as he took the hammer from her hand.

"I don't believe," he went on with a smile, "that women were meant to drive nails. So it's a good thing we came along. What's this to be?"

"O, it's you again, isn't it?" she said, an expression of pleasure slowly spreading itself over her face. "I'm glad you've come back this way. I called after you as you went away, but I guess you

didn't hear. I wanted to tell you I had a few apples left over from last fall—my apples always keep well—and with a bit of dried beef, and a little bread and butter they'd make a good lunch. But I didn't want any pay. I guess my voice is like the rest of me—weak and not good for much."

"What can I do for you with this?" asked Pete, dropping his eyes before the kindly glance of the faded ones.

"O, I was trying to make a scarecrow. I wanted to nail a piece across this for the arms. I've got some old clothes in here to dress it up with."

Leaving the board in Pete's hands, she turned to go to the shed.

"I'll get 'em, Mrs. Gill." Pete sprang after her in dismay, but Cliff was already ahead of her. The two exchanged frightened glances as the resolute footsteps kept on.

"Mrs. Gill," said Cliff, with a little gasp, "if you'll just show Pete about the nailing, I'll bring the clothes. They're in here, ain't they?"

The little old lady held up a warning finger.

"Yes," she said. "But I don't let any one go in there but myself. My hens' nests are in there, and they're on 'em now. If any one else goes it frightens 'em."

"I'll go in as quiet as a mouse," said Cliff, slipping in and shutting the door in her face. With quick hands he stripped the clothes from the post, and the next moment was out of the stable again, closing the door with a quietness which satisfied the mistress of the hens.

"Come in and have lunch first," urged Mrs. Gill.

"No," said Pete, "we'll feel lots better if we do this first."

"Well, I want you to enjoy it," said Mrs. Gill. "Now, when this is nailed on I'll put the clothes on and stuff 'em with straw."

How firmly Pete's blows rang, while Cliff ran for an armful of straw! Their fun over the comical figure was not now suppressed and the old woman readily joined in their laughter.

"I want to put it by my cherry trees," she explained. "The birds get all the cherries. Not but that the birds have a right to their share of 'em, but these early ones I'm savin' for the poor little things over there, bless their hearts."

She pointed to where, at a distance of half a mile, could be seen an orphan asylum.

"Some of 'em are sick, lately," she went on, "and I've promised 'em every one of my fresh eggs. They don't relish anything else, poor little mites. It's a comfort they can have something they can eat—'specially as I ain't got much to give to anybody."

The boys took turns in digging a hole in which to set firmly the protector of the cherries. The fun reached its height when Mrs. Gill brought out an old sunbonnet, which gave the crowning touch to the scarecrow. It need not be said that the lunch which came afterwards was most heartily enjoyed.

"I'd a good deal rather 'twas there than in the other place," said Pete, as on their way home, after a cordial good-by to the old lady, the two looked back at her image standing guard over the cherries.

"So would I," said Cliff, in hearty agreement.

And the faces of both boys expressed far more than their words.

Animal Worship in India.

ALL animal life is considered sacred among the Hindus. A man who slays an animal is looked upon as a murderer, and there are even some of the stricter sort who keep their mouths covered that they may not breathe in an insect and destroy it. Birds build their nests fearlessly, for they have never learnt to dread the presence of human beings; while bulls, monkeys and parrots range the streets and compounds, and even snatch things from the open stalls of the shopkeepers, without any one daring to prevent them. The list of sacred animals is almost too long to quote; but among them we may mention elephants, geese, tigers, buffaloes, rats, rams, peacocks, fish, boars, crocodiles, wagtails, cats, and horses.

The cow is worshiped from gratitude. Among a people who never kill animals for food, it is easy to understand how valuable milk must be. The devotion with which the cow is regarded is difficult for Europeans to comprehend. It is related of a Christian convert that she came to a missionary in great distress, to know if God would be angry with her for not eating beef as the English did, for if she were to eat the flesh of the cow it would seem to her like eating the flesh of her mother! Milk, curds, and butter are offered to the gods as sacrifices, and by eating clarified butter men are supposed to be cleansed from their sins.

One day in the year is set aside for the worship of the cow, but the strict Hindus worship it daily after bathing. Going near a cow, they throw flowers before it, and offer it fresh grass, and they bow down in obeisance as they walk round and round it. If the owner of a cow sells it he is threatened by the sacred books with as many thousand years of torment as there are hairs on its body. The cow is supposed to be a type of the all-yielding earth, and the Hindus are taught that there is a "cow of plenty" who is able to grant all the desires of her worshipers. Images of this cow are sold in the bazaars, and are worshiped with prayers and offerings.

All-Fool's Day Everywhere.

By Pamela McArthur Cole.

APRIL the first is the time when children play tricks on one another, and on their elders, too. Some of the tricks are very funny ones. American children are not the only ones who amuse themselves by making "April fools" of one another. In many other countries children play the same games. This April fooling used to be an amusement for grown people, too; indeed, many children's games used to be played by older persons.

Once, many, many years ago, the year began with the twenty-fifth of March, and it was the custom in many countries to hold a New Year's festival of eight days, and the closing day, the first of April, was spent in such capers as are now left for the children only.

The "April fool" is known by different names in different countries. In France he is called "*poisson d'Avril*," an April fish, a silly creature that allows himself to be caught. In the northern part of England, and in Scotland, he is called a "gowk"—that is, a cuckoo, a bird called silly because it lays its eggs in other birds' nests; and a favorite trick with the Scotch children is "hunting the gowk"—that is, to send somebody on a fool's errand.

One of the most pleasant April fool stories I ever read was about a prince of Lorraine (in France) many years ago. He and his wife were imprisoned in a great castle by some cruel persons, and were in danger of losing their lives. They managed to get some clothes of a peasant near by, and disguised themselves, hoping to make their escape. They crept softly down the great stairs, and they got out to the great gate of the castle, without anybody seeing them. There they met a servant maid, and she knew them in a moment. She screamed and ran to give the alarm.

It was the evening of the first of April. The people in the castle were at supper, and in all the noise and clatter nobody happened to hear her. She ran into the guard-room, where many of the soldiers were, and screamed out, "They are gone! The prince and princess have escaped!"

"O, yes! escaped, have they?" said the men, laughing.

"Yes, yes! Run! you will overtake them."

"O, yes!" said the soldiers, "you are going to make fine April fools of us,—but we sha'n't run!"

And they did not; and long before they believed the servant was telling the truth, and not trying an April fool trick at all, the prisoners had escaped, and two innocent persons were safe.

The Man With the Iron Collar.

IN China they have a way of punishing thieves by putting heavy wooden collars on their necks and making them wear them through the streets. But the man we tell about is certainly not a Chinaman, and there is a very different story as to how he came by the rusty gridiron collar which he wore for so long.

The man is a Hindu, whose story is well known in India. When he was a young man he did a very wicked thing. Though he was a heathen and worshiped idols, he knew it was wrong, and wished to be forgiven. The poor fellow did not know that the true God was like a loving father who was eager to forgive sins, and he supposed he would have to buy a pardon by doing some very good act to make up for the bad one. The Christian missionaries could have shown him a better way, but he had never heard of them. So he had this heavy gridiron collar riveted on his neck, and made a vow that he would wear it year in and year out until he could beg enough money to pay for digging a well in a very dry and thirsty place.

For seventeen years the poor fellow tramped up and down the roads of the northern provinces of India with the burden of his sin on his heart and with his collar wearing into his shoulders. He had an image of one of his gods fastened to the iron slats, and he carried long strings of "tulsie" seeds on which he counted his prayers, as Roman Catholics count their beads.

He was growing old and wrinkled, and his beard and hair were getting gray, but he still felt that his sin was not forgiven, when one day passing through a village, he heard a strange, white-faced preacher say, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He pricked up his ears at the words, "cleanseth from all sin." That was what he had been working for all these years. He went to the missionary, heard the story of the Father's love and pardon, and finally became a joyous Christian. First he dug the well as he had vowed to do; then he had the irons filed through, and the collar taken off, and he was a free man. No wonder he has now become a Christian preacher and an earnest and faithful helper of the missionaries.

The Convent Song.

By Edna H. Turpin.

The convent's rules were rigid, and its cells were low and bare;
Hoary-headed, few but holy, were the brethren gathered there.
As their lives were given to service, so their lives were given to God,
And daily they by faith and works the heavenward pathway trod.
They sought the woods at sunrise and again ere vespers rang,
There in God's primeval temple many a hymn of praise they sang.
Men shunned the tones discordant, and, as the legends say,
At sound of their shrill, cracked voices the birds flew far away.

* * *

One evening brought a way-lost youth, who had their kindest care,
And, having shared their bed and board, went forth their hymn to share.
Their song rose shrill and quavering, his voice came true and clear,
Like organ tones so rich, so round, the monks stood stil to hear.
Tearful and rapt, awhile they stood, then guerdon proffered they
Of their pittance, if as songster in the convent he would stay.
He should quaff the ruddy wine cup, he should feast on flesh and bread;
Theirs be barley crust and water, fast and vigil, so they said.
So he tarried for their silver, for their wine and bread he stayed,
And again that eve at vespers his voice echoed through the glade.
Silent stood the listening brethren, and the birds were mute with shame,
As to hear that matchless music all the forest creatures came.

* * *

In the dusk the monks turned homeward; lo! before them in the way,
Bright and solemn, stood an angel; and in worship down kneeled they.
"Full twelve years at morn and even your sweet hymn has failed not,
But to-day why is there silence, and your song incense forgot?"
"Silence?" cried the monks in wonder, "never was such music heard;
False and quavering are our voices, his trills sweetly as a bird."
But the angel: "Not such music makes angelic hosts rejoice;
It was hearts you lifted Godward; he has just a beauteous voice.
No songs enter heaven's gateway which mere pride and skill upraise
While to God's own ear forever rise the hymns of loving praise."

Getting Ready for Fires.

By William T. Ellis.

THE fire-bells are clanging vigorously out in the street while I sit in my office and pen these words. There is no music that thrills the heart and sets the blood to leaping through the veins like the music of the fire-bells.

The sound that is now in my ears has called up many pictures that I have seen—pictures of dashing, spirited horses, drawing engines on which firemen hang for dear life, at the same time pulling on the boots and hats and rubber coats that will make them ready for work; pictures of great buildings ablaze, with smoke and flame streaming and pouring out of doors and windows, while walls fall and sparks and embers fly upward; pictures of brave firemen, sometimes covered with ice, sometimes blackened with smoke, but always battling heroically with their fierce enemy, and risking their lives for the preservation of life and property.

But another picture arises before my mind as I listen to the ringing of the fire-bells. In it there are no dashing horses or swirling smoke or devouring flames. It is a picture of a high building in an out-of-the-way street of a great city, with ropes and ladders down the sides, and with a large gymnasium indoors. This is the training school for firemen. Here the city requires the new men to stay for a course of preparation before it permits them to enter upon the grave duties of their chosen calling. The discipline that they must undergo is taxing and vigorous. Day after day the men must swing dumb-bells and Indian-clubs, go through the wearying exercises with pulley-weights, learn the art of climbing swiftly up and down loose ropes, swing from hanging rings, and traverse horizontal bars, suspended by their hands; until their palms are blistered and every muscle in their bodies aches from the new experience. All this the apprentice firemen must do to train their bodies to be quick and strong and trustworthy.

It is essential that a fireman should know his own powers. He must be able to tell instantly the weight he can carry, the distance he can leap, the power of his grip, and such like, for on these things a human life may one day depend. A moment of indecision in a critical position may cost dear.

In addition to the forms of drill I have mentioned, these men who are training to be firemen must practice carrying heavy hose up the ladders placed against the outside of the building; they must climb up and down single ropes from dizzy heights, and at times with a companion in their arms; they must walk along high and narrow ledges; they must leap from the topmost windows into the life-net below—in short, all the wonderful deeds that firemen perform while on duty, and that you read about in the papers, they must first practice here in this training school. Do you wonder that the fire-bells—they have ceased ringing now—make me think of how the firemen get ready? And does not the fireman's course of preparations make you think of getting ready, too? It takes more than wishes to make heroes.

How may you get ready? By plenty of clean, honest play; by faithful, diligent study; by the reading of noble books and the forming of noble friendships; by obedience to teachers and parents, and by constant self-watchfulness and self-restraint. Hard? Possibly; I shouldn't wonder if some of the firemen thought they were having rather a hard time of it in the gymnasium.

Power of Habit.

A CALIFORNIA stage driver had held the reins for many years; and when he began to grow old, his hands were crooked into hooks and his fingers were stiffened in that shape so that they could not be straightened out.

There is a similar process that goes on in men's souls when they continue to do the same things over and over. If you are trained, and train yourself from childhood, to be gentle and patient, to control your temper, to resist wrong, you life will grow into beauty, and the peacefulness of your heart will at length shine upon your very face. On the other hand, if you give way from childhood to ugly tempers, resentful feelings, bitterness and anger, your life will grow into permanent disfigurement.

One who accustoms himself to think of pure and holy things, who sets his affection on things above, and strives to reach whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are lovely, will grow upward toward the things he loves and thinks upon. But one who lets his mind turn habitually to debasing things, things unholy, unclean, sensual, will find his whole soul bending downward and growing toward the earth.

In each life, however lowly,
There are seeds of mighty good;
Still, we shrink from soul's appealing,
With a timid, "If we could!"
But the God who judgeth all things,
Knows the truth is—"If we would."

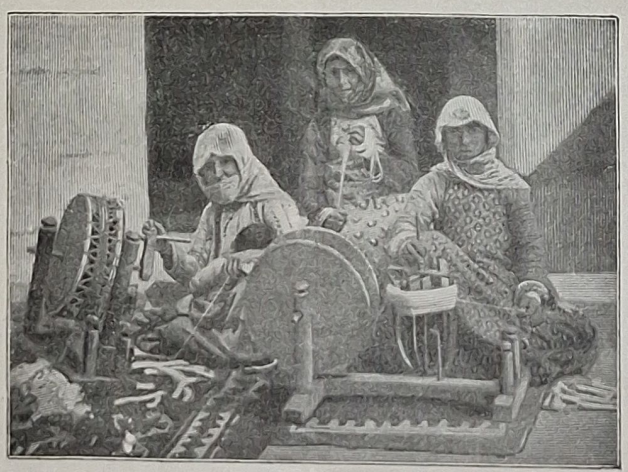
[Selected.

Emile's Wonderful Escape.

DURING the French Revolution of 1789, in the time called the Reign of Terror, many innocent persons were in great danger of their lives, as the soldiers searched everywhere for those who were loyal to the imprisoned king, killing them, and also those who sheltered them.

Early one morning, as Pastor Oberlin, of Ban de la Roche, was sitting in his room, a violent knocking was heard at the door. He hastened to open it, and found himself face to face with two soldiers.

"Citizen Pastor," said one of them respectfully to him, "the tribunal of Strasburg has received a letter in which you are accused of concealing in your house the daughter of an aristocrat, a traitoress who has been condemned to death as an accomplice of her father; and we have been ordered to search your house. But it is not willingly that we offer you this indignity. We know, citizen, that you never speak anything but the truth. If, therefore, you will give us your word that you are not concealing such a person in your house, we will believe you and will retire."



HINDU WIDOWS SPINNING TOGETHER.

Had Oberlin replied, "My dear friends, the person of whom you are in search is not known to me," that would have been an untruth. "What would that matter?" perhaps a reader would say. "An untruth is permissible when it is a question of saving life."

But Oberlin thought otherwise. He was firmly convinced that, in the greatest peril, God can succor us without our committing sin. He did not hesitate an instant; but without showing the anguish that filled his heart, he calmly replied to the soldiers:

"It cannot be pleasing to God that, out of courtesy to me, you should refrain from discharging your duty. You are ordered to search my house. Let it be so. Come, I will show you the way." And Oberlin conducted the soldiers over his house. He maintained a calm countenance, but his heart was unceasingly lifted up to God.

At length they arrived at the small room occupied by the little girl. "Here is the last room, my friends," said Oberlin, throwing wide open the door.

The gendarmes, who felt more and more ill at ease in the discharge of the duty to which they were called in this peaceful house, cast but a rapid glance into the room. One of them advanced to the threshold of the door, and not seeing any one, turned and said:

"Well, there is nobody here. You have been wronged, Citizen Pastor. We beg you will kindly excuse us the trouble we have given you. Farewell."

With these words they left the parsonage, respectfully saluting the pastor.

But where was the little girl? Had she slipped out of the room without being perceived by the gendarmes? Had she hidden? Still less! What then had she done, seeing that she must have been ignorant of the peril which threatened her?

Emile, having dressed her hair, had washed her hands, and was just drying them on the towel hung on the back of the door, when suddenly she heard footsteps and saw the door opened. Being but half-dressed, she was ashamed at the thought of being so discovered, and shrank behind the door, remaining there as quiet as a little mouse till the intruder withdrew. She had at that moment no idea of the marvelous deliverance of which she was the object.

We may well understand the depth of her thankfulness, and of Oberlin's. The worthy pastor rejoiced above all that he had not charged his conscience with an untruth.

Before long Robespierre fell, the revolutionary tribunal was abolished, and it was possible to breathe once more in peace. As Emile had no home, she remained in the house of Oberlin till her marriage. She has long since entered into rest, but two of her daughters are still living.

The Story of Piyari.

By A. H. H.

ABOUT twenty years ago, in one of the Hindu homes of India, a little girl was born. She was a beautiful child, with rich complexion, and liquid, dark eyes. Her mother was not so very glad to welcome a daughter, for she knew that in India life is not easy for girls, but she could not help the mother-love for her baby, and she called her Piyari, which means "beloved."

The little Piyari grew and throve, happy and rollicking like any baby, until she was four years old. Then one day the barber's wife came to the house. In India the barber's wife is an important person. She does for the women what the barber does for the men—dresses the hair and takes care of the finger nails. She brings all the gossip to these shut-up women, and besides, she makes matches between their children.

So now Piyari's mother said to the barber's wife, "Here is my little girl four years old, and not even betrothed yet. It will be a disgrace if she is not married by the time she is five, and I fear what her father would do with her. Do you know of any nice boy, who has a good bit of fortune? We can give her a pretty dowry."

Then the barber's wife put on her thinking-cap, and said:

"I know a fine Brahmin gentleman who wants a young wife. He has only two wives now, and he is very rich. He is twenty-five years old, and such a handsome man."

Well, after many words, it was settled by this go-between that the little unconscious Piyari should marry this man who was more than twenty years older than she, and had two wives already.

When the wedding day came, the baby bride was dressed in rich silks, with many jewels, and told she was to be married. It was all like a beautiful play to her.

Did she go home with her husband then? No, there were still some happy years in her own mother's house, though the shadows of sorrowful days to come began to fall on her. Her mother talked often to her about the new home.

"You will live with your mother-in-law, as all

brides do. She will beat you maybe—she will make you work hard. You must hate her—hate her!"

Strange counsel, was it not, for a mother to give? If you could ask her why she gave it, she would say, "It is the custom."

When Piyari was twelve years old, she went to her husband, and sure enough, it was all as her own mother had told her. If you could ask the mother-in-law why she was cruel to her new daughter, she too would reply, "It is the custom."

But the worst was to come. In less than a year after the child went to him, the husband sickened and died. His mother blamed the three widows for his death—that is "custom" too—but most of all the little child-widow, for "he was well until you came."

All Piyari's ornaments were taken from her—the bracelets, and anklets and jewels which are the pride of a Hindu girl's heart. If the mother-in-law was unkind before, she was cruel now. She beat the child-widow; sometimes she struck her with hot irons which burnt into the young flesh. This girl, only thirteen years old, could never again go to a feast or a merry-making; she must have but one meal a day, and drink impure water like that of any street puddle. Other girls shrank from her shadow, lest it should cast a like fate upon them. Do you wonder that Piyari's eyes are unutterably sad, as she sits and cleans the cooking vessels of the kitchen?

Thus weary years passed. Many, many times the little widow wished she might do as they did in the old days before the English ruled—burn to death on a funeral pyre.

Perhaps her only pleasure was when two or three other widows brought their low spinning wheels, to spin cotton together in the same courtyard. As they twirled the wheels so deftly, you may be sure each told stories of her cruel mother-in-law.

Then—then—there came a foreign teacher, a white woman who had never married, and yet was not disgraced. The wonder of it! She told them of a Saviour for helpless Hindu widows, and of a beautiful life hereafter for all who loved this Saviour. It would quite make up for all the sorrows here.

Who could help heeding such an astonishing story? Certainly not Piyari. Beloved once more, beloved of God, who revealed himself thus—Piyari became a Christian.

And now a new life has opened to her, for she has been taken into a Christian school. She has not resumed her ornaments, she thinks little about them, and the "custom" of widowhood is not easily broken. Though a Christian, even to this day when she goes out she must put on a soiled mantle. Why? Because if she wears one which is white and clean, the people will say she is not spotless herself, but is a bad woman, so she must wear a soiled garment to show her own purity. Is it not a strange contradiction? But heathen minds are full of such absurd and cruel ideas as these.

SAD LITTLE PIYARI.

This is the story of only one widow, and there are twenty millions of them in India. Twenty millions to suffer as Piyari did; and so few Christian teachers to give them a message of hope. Who will send more teachers?

Military Carrier-Pigeons.

FOLLOWING in the footsteps of all the other European governments, England has arranged for the use of carrier-pigeons in the army. In time of war it is urged that these swift couriers of the air can be used when railway, telegraph, messenger, and other usual means are cut off; and therefore pigeon-lofts will be established by the government at places where they will prove most effective.

Germany has the most complete carrier-pigeon service in the world. There is hardly a town of any importance in the German Empire that has not a pigeon-loft, and the German Emperor annually distributes numerous prizes for long and rapid flights. The annual appropriation for the pigeons in the army budget is about six thousand dollars.

France has more birds than Germany, and spends twenty thousand dollars a year in maintaining them, but they are not so well distributed. There are scores of private lofts in Germany that will be at the service of the government in time of need.

If every one were wise and sweet,
And every one were jolly;
If every heart with gladness beat,
And none were melancholy;
If none should grumble or complain,
And nobody should labor
In evil work, but each would fain
To love and help his neighbor—
Oh, what a happy world 't would be
For you and me—for you and me!

[Selected.

The Kitten that Treed the Bear.

AN army lieutenant stationed in Yellowstone Park, where the wild animals have become quite tame, tells, in "St. Nicholas," the amusing story of how a kitten chased a bear.

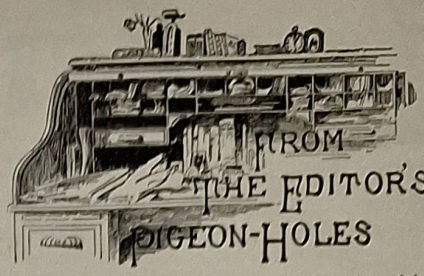
Chris Burns, the veteran first sergeant of Troop D, had a kitten which, during the summer camping of the troop at the Lower Geyser Basin, made her home within the sergeant's tent. Here, curled up on a pair of army blankets, she defied the world in general and dogs in particular. When the latter approached, she would elevate every bristle on her brave little back, her eyes would glow like live coals, and her tail would swell up threateningly.

One day, when the camp was bathed in sunshine, and every soldier in camp felt lazy, an inquisitive black bear came down the mountain-side, and, whether because he was in search of adventure or because attracted by a savory smell from the cook's fire, began to walk about among the white tents of the cavalry command.

Suddenly the kitten caught sight of him. Dogs by the score she had seen, but this particular "dog" was the largest and the hairiest dog she had ever seen. But she did not hesitate. It was enough for her that an enemy had invaded her special domain. Hissing forth her spite, while her little body quivered with rage, she darted forth at the bear. The onslaught was sudden, and one glance was enough for Bruin. With a snort of fear, he made for the nearest tree, a short distance away, and did not pause until he was safely perched among the upper branches! Meanwhile the kitten stalked proudly about on the ground beneath, keeping close guard over her huge captive, her back still curved into a bow, and her hair still bristling with righteous indignation, while her tail would now and then give a significant little wave, as if to say, "That's the way I settle impertinent bears."

The soldiers, who meanwhile had poured forth from their tents, could scarcely believe their eyes; but there was the bear in the tree, and the kitten below, and there were those who had seen the affair from beginning to end.

And perhaps the strangest part of it all was that the bear would not stir from his safe position in the branches until the kitten had been persuaded to leave her huge enemy a clear means of retreat! Then he slid shamefacedly down from his perch, and ambled hastily away toward the mountains.



AT a shoe factory at Lynn, on the occasion of the visit of the delegates to the trades congress, a pair of shoes was made in fourteen minutes and five seconds. This lowers the record by more than a minute, and, needless to say, was a revelation to the visitors.

NOT every one who looks at the dial of a clock knows that the four I's, which are in the place of the usual IV, to designate the number four, are there because of the obstinacy of Charles V. of France. The story runs as follows: When Henry Vick carried to the king the first accurate clock, the king said to him that the IV was wrong, and should be changed to IIII. Vick said, "You are wrong, your majesty." Whereat the king thundered out: "I am never wrong! Take it away and correct the mistake." From that time to this day the four I's have stood as the mark of the fourth hour.

THERE is one country in the world, and probably only one, which gets along with a single policeman. That is Iceland.

Iceland is peopled by the descendants of Vikings, including many famous warriors and heroes. but they are so law-abiding that they have no need of policemen.

The solitary officer, in spite of his great responsibility, has a very easy time. He is maintained more for ornament and dignity than for use. The Icelanders think it would not do to have a capital without a policeman, and so they keep one.

The Iceland police force is large in one sense. Its single member is six feet high, broad-shouldered, and handsomely uniformed.

WHENCE came the oft-quoted phrase, "Put in apple-pie order"? An obliging, if also an imaginative author has recently issued a volume on the quaint sayings of early New England, from which is to be gathered an explanation of the phrase. It seems that in Puritan times one Hepzibah Merton was accustomed to bake for her large household two or three dozen apple pies of a Saturday, that were to last through the ensuing week as a household supply. These she carefully arranged on a shelf, placing a label on each of the week days by name, all in orderly row, and woe to the son, daughter or grandchild who should disarrange Mother Hepzibah's apple-pie order. Doubtless for Monday, wash day; Tuesday, ironing day; and Friday, as clearing day—when dust is brushed from one place to fall into another, and things are topsy-turvy, merely to show how disorder differs from order—the pies were larger than for other days, which for household work ranked as idle days, and when there was less hunger. Old Aunt Hepzibah's apple-pie order was known to the entire settlement, and originated the proverb aforesaid.

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